

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



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New master's program at Laurier emphasizes gender and genre

Waterloo, Ont. (Oct. 25) — When Michele Krzewski wrote the thesis for her undergraduate English degree, she became intrigued with how some feminist theories marginalize many women instead of helping them find their voices.

Now a graduate student, she is making an in-depth study of developing theories integrating gender and literature as one of six students in Wilfrid Laurier University's new master of arts program in English with emphasis in gender and genre.

"Issues of gender and genre have caught the imagination of students as well as professional scholars," says James Weldon, the graduate officer in the department of English.

Other universities offer courses in either gender or genre, but Laurier's program is innovative in its concentration on both. Students are using current theories such as deconstruction, reader-response, postcolonial, and feminist as they analyze texts within the literary canon as well as those that challenge it.

Courses offered this term are modernism to post-modernism, chivalry and medieval romance, and fiction by contemporary British women. Winter term courses will be psychology of genre in modern narrative, film genre and feminist theory, postcoloniality: genre/gender, and the nature lyric.

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"The program capitalizes on the established strengths of professors in the English department," Weldon says.

The new program is Laurier's ninth at the master's level. (The university also has doctoral programs in social work and geography.) Launched with modest promotion, the program has already attracted inquiries from Asia, Europe, and across Canada.

Kathleen McConnell, who received her undergraduate degree this spring from Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax, says she is excited by the challenge of a new program. "It's really wonderful to be in on the first year of a new program. We have opportunity to influence its development."

Both McConnell and Krzewski say the small classes make the courses more stimulating. "We have some great discussions," says Krzewski. "It's pushing me beyond what I thought I'd be doing this year. "

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Note: Michele Krzewski can be reached at 886-9266 and Kathleen McConnell can be reached at 725-9035. Reporters and photographers may attend a regular Tuesday class by making arrangements in advance with Julia Ann Easley.